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TAGS: [EFIN](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [KS](#)
SUBJECT: ROKG THINKING BIG FOR NOVEMBER G20 SUMMIT

Classified By: Economic Minister Counselor Gregory Burton.
Reason: 1.4(B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Over lunch with the Ambassador and visiting EAP Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Joseph Donovan, ROK G20 Coordinator Sakong Il described ROKG efforts to establish the primacy of the G20 and ensure the success of the Seoul summit in November 2010. The ROKG is negotiating aggressively with Canada and Japan on summit sequence issues and is working quickly to establish a forward-looking G20 agenda for Seoul. According to Sakong, the June summit in Canada is likely to conclude G20 consideration of the global financial crisis and exit strategies. In Seoul, the leaders can be expected to shift the focus to post-crisis management and long-term issues, such as development cooperation and climate change. End Summary.

Sequence Issues with Canada and Japan

¶2. (C) The ROKG and Canada continue to disagree over the sequence of G20 and G8 summit meetings in June 2010. Because the G20 leaders in Pittsburgh agreed that the G20 is now the premier forum for international economic cooperation, Sakong said it would be of enormous symbolic importance for the G20 to precede the G8. According to Sakong, the U.K., Germany, Italy, and France along with non-G8 members of the G20, all agree. Sakong noted that ROK Sherpa Rhee Chang-yong was in Washington for discussions on this point with U.S. Sherpa Michael Froman. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who believes strongly that the G8 should be first, will be in Seoul December 6-7 to discuss the scheduling of these events.

¶3. (C) Although of lesser importance to the ROKG than the G8/G20 sequence issue, the ROKG is also engaged in scheduling discussions with Japan over APEC. According to Sakong, Japan wants to host APEC in Yokohama before the November G20 in Seoul. Although the ROKG would prefer to have the G20 first, Sakong acknowledged that Veterans Day in the United States and Remembrance Day in France might make it impossible to have the G20 before APEC.

Agendas and Format

¶4. (C) The ROKG and Canada generally agree on the division of substance between the June and November summits. The June summit, Sakong said, would address exit strategies, including the issue of how countries could reconcile the timing of each country's exit strategies with general principles that would guide the G20 more broadly. Sakong mentioned the IMF's recently formulated principles, though they are "very general," could be a possible starting point for discussion.

¶5. (C) The Seoul summit, meanwhile, would address post-crisis management and long-term issues. Development issues would be high on the agenda. To that end, the ROKG plans to co-host a meeting with the World Bank in March or

April to develop specific project proposals, in collaboration with NGOs and the private sector. Sakong also cited economic aspects of climate change as appropriate for G20 consideration. Asked about how the ROKG would handle requests for engagement with NGOs and other outside groups, Sakong said that he has instructed members of the Presidential Committee to identify and prioritize possible issues and partners. "We can't do everything," he said.

¶6. (C) Ultimately, however, he viewed the G20 as being able to take over much of the G8 agenda. Sakong specifically noted that France, which will host the G20 in 2011, is now supportive of this evolution. He recounted that President Sarkozy had at first wanted to expand the G8 to a G14, but now supports the wider forum and considers himself "the father of the G20." Japan, said Sakong, still preferred the G8 to the G20, and would be unlikely to change its view under Japan's new government.

¶7. (C) The format of the upcoming G20 summits are still under review. Sakong expressed appreciation for Prime Minister Rudd's idea of seating just the G20 leaders alone at a table and allowing them to engage in direct, unscripted dialogue. Sakong was critical of the "hectic" London summit, where Leaders and Sherpas met separately and negotiated different drafts of the same communique. He thought Pittsburgh was a good compromise, although the communique was "pretty much worked out by the Sherpas."

The ROK as a Global Leader

¶8. (C) Sakong said developing countries identify with the ROK and have high expectations for the November summit. While Korea has many lessons to share with the developing world, the ROKG does not want to be perceived merely as a champion for the developing world. Rather, the ROKG wants to be seen as a global leader and will resist such tendencies. Similarly, the ROKG will resist efforts to establish regional groupings among the G20 nations. Again, he stressed, Korea wants to be a global, not a regional, leader.

ROKG Forms Organizing Committee

¶9. (C) The ROKG's Presidential Committee on the G20, which Sakong chairs, consists of 68 government officials, academics, and private sector representatives. Foreign representatives have also been retained to advise the Committee, including Baroness Shriti Vadera, former UK Minister for Economic Competitiveness, Small Business and Enterprise. Vadera is based in London, but flies to Seoul for three to five days at a time. She is "very aggressive and has lots of ideas," Sakong commented. Meanwhile, the Australian government has sent Ministry of Treasury official Holdaway Hae-kyong to work full-time with the Presidential Committee in Seoul.

¶10. (SBU) The Committee intends to schedule a full calendar of meetings, beginning with a meeting for Deputy Finance Ministers in February 2010 in Songdo City near Incheon. There will also be a number of Cabinet-level gatherings, including meetings for Foreign, Treasury, and Energy Ministers, throughout the year in various locations in the ROK. Sakong also broadly described expected meetings and workshops with the IMF, World Bank, think tanks, and other organizations.

Comment

¶11. (C) The ROKG is committed to cementing the G20's place as the premier forum for international economic cooperation and is intent on devoting the time, manpower, and resources necessary to ensure a successful summit in November 2010. We expect the ROKG to begin announcing a brisk schedule of workshops, seminars, and meetings that will commence with the Deputy Finance Minister's meeting in Songdo and continue

through the Leader's Summit in Seoul next November. Post will follow up with the Presidential Committee to get as much detail as possible on upcoming meeting plans.

STEPHENS